

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 01395 291037Z
ACTION NEA-07

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S E C R E T MUSCAT 1395

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PINT, MU, SF
SUBJECT: OMANI VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA

REF MUSCAT 1359 (NOTAL)

1. FONMIN ZAWAWI RETURNED MUSCAT SEPT. 27 FROM HIS BRIEF TRIP TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND IMMEDIATELY REPORTED TO SULTAN QABOOS IN SALALAH. ON MORNING SEPT 29, HE RECEIVED ME (IN RESPONSE TO MY REQUEST OF WEEK AGO TO SEE HIM ON ANOTHER SUBJECT) AND VOLUNTEERED FOL COMMENTS ON HIS TRIP.

2. HE VISITED BOTH PRETORIA AND SALISBURY, EACH FOR DAY AND A HALF. THIS, HE SAID, WAS AT REQUEST OF SULTAN QABOOS WHO BELIEVES THAT IT BEHOOVES OMAN TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF DIRECT CONTACT WITH THOSE AND OTHER SOUTHERN AFRICAN AND INDIAN OCEAN STATES WHICH ARE CONCERNED FOR SECURITY OF THIS GENERAL REGION. ZAWAWI SAID HE INTENDS TO VISIT SOME OTHER STATES OF REGION AS WELL (HE MENTIONED MOZAMBIQUE, SEYCHELLES, COMOROS AND SRI LANKA) BEFORE LONG. HE SAID HIS RECENT VISIT MIGHT RAISE SOME EYEBROWS IF IT BECAME KNOWN BUT THAT THE SULTAN BELIEVES OMAN
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MUST BECOME MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT EVENTS IN AREA AROUND IT AND THAT IT MUST NOT BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT OTHERS MAY THINK. SAID OMAN SPECIFICALLY WISHED USG TO KNOW ABOUT THESE CONTACTS AND TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN NO WAY IS IT PUSHING ITSELF FORWARD AS A MEDIATOR OF ANY AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

3. ZAWAWI MENTIONED THAT SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE

SPOKE (NO NAMES GIVEN) EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE ANGER ABOUT ATTITUDE THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN TAKING TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IN RECENT MONTHS. THEY SAID THEY OBJECTED TO PRESSURES THEY WERE UNDERGOING IN THIS REGARD, AND THAT THEY DOUBTED THEY WOULD BE GETTING SO MUCH STATIC AND HAVING SO MANY "DEMANDS" MADE OF THEM FROM THE SOVIET UNION IF THEY HAPPENED TO BE A COMMUNIST COUNTRY. THEY SEEMED ESPECIALLY UPSET ABOUT USG HAVNG REMONSTRATED WITH THEM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO ABOUT "HOLES IN THE KALAHARI DESERT" ON BASIS OF INFORMATION PASSED TO USG BY THE SOVIETS. ZAWAWI CLAIMS TO HAVE ASKED HIS PRETORIA HOSTS WHAT THE TRUTH WAS ABOUT THESE "HOLES" AND WHETHER THEY MIGH BE PLACES FOR DEPOSITING NUCLEAR WASTE MATERIAL, AND TO HAVE GOTTEN A "NO COMMENT" RESPONSE.

4. ASKED IF HE HAD MET WITH ANY BLACK LEADERS IN EITHER PRE-TORIA OR SALISBURY, ZAWAWI SAID NO. THEY HAD BEEN WILLING, BUT IT COULD NOT BE ARRANGED IN THE TIME HE HAD AT HIS DISPOSAL.

5. ZAWAWI SAID HE RETURNED TO MUSCAT VIA FEZ, MOROCCO, WHERE HE MET WITH VACATIONING CROWN PRINCE FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA.

6. COMMENT. WE FIND THESE LIGHTNING VISITS BY ZAWAWI TO SUCH REMOTE SPOTS TO BE RATHER ODD. THEY SEEM TO REFLECT THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE SULTAN AND HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISORS TOWARD EVENTS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AND A SUDDEN DESIRE FOR OMAN TO BE MORE WIDELY RECOGNIZED WITHIN LEADERSHIP ECHELONS
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IN COUNTRIES AROUND THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A SMALL BUT DETERMINED "FORCE" AGAINST ALLOWING UNSTABILIZING CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL STATUS QUO. WE WONDER IF THE SAUDIS MAY POSSIBLY BE PUTTING THE SULTAN UP TO THIS SUDDEN ACTIVITY, BUT HAVE NO EVIDENCE THIS IS THE CASE.
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